

AN ANSWER
TO
MR. WILLIAM HEWITT'S TRACT
AGAINST THE
LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

*"Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power
of God."*—JESUS CHRIST.

BY PARLEY P. PRATT.

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AN ANSWER.

MR. HEWITT, in his preface, informs the public, that the Latter-Day Saints are "*headed by a fanatic of the name of Joseph Smith.*"

Now, if Mr. H. knows Mr. Smith to be a fanatic, he is to be blamed for not telling the public how he knows it: But if he does not know it, he has run a very great risk of condemnation for judging rashly, and perhaps unjustly. We would advise him to repent of this sin as soon as possible, and remember that Jesus has forbidden him to judge rash judgment.

He calls the Saints the "*Would-be only-holy-people of God.*" Whether he means by this, that we wish all others to be unholy; or whether he only means that we, as a people, aim to be holy, I cannot tell! If he means the latter, we feel truly grateful for so high a compliment upon our intentions; but if he means the former, we must deny the charge, for we truly wish all people to be holy.

He accuses one Elder Smith with wilful error, by saying, "*He (Smith) knows his house is built upon the sand, while mine is built upon the rock,*" &c.

This is very hard judging indeed! Who that is bound to eternity, would choose to remain upon a sandy foundation instead of a rock, and even do it knowingly? I dare not even judge Mr. Hewitt in this manner. I am persuaded that if he knew his foundation to be a sandy one, he would gladly remove to a rock.

I would here remind him that, not every one who saith Lord, Lord, is to enter into the kingdom of God; but he that doeth the will of God. None are built upon the rock but those that are built upon the truth. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. I hope, for Mr. H.'s own sake, he will repent of these hasty and rash judgments.—So much for his preface.

The pamphlet then commences by giving a general review of false prophets and imposters, who have in turn deceived the people in different ages; as if mingling these with the Latter-Day Saints would prove anything against them. The only thing in which he seems to think Mr. J. Smith will compare with them is, that he has had "*wonderful things revealed to him by an Angel.*" Now, if this is to be the test, then, it will apply equally to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Manoah, Daniel, Joseph, and Mary, the Shepherds, Zechariah, Paul, Peter, John, and a thousand other saints,—who all professed to have wonderful things revealed to them by angels; therefore they were all condemned by Mr. H.'s rule, as much as Mr. Smith, and their followers were as likely to be deceived as the Latter-Day Saints!

But Mr. Hewitt wonders greatly that "*a new sect should arise in the 19th century.*" I would enquire of him, Why a sect might not arise in the 19th century, as well as in the 18th?—(Methodism arose in the 18th.) Are the people of the 19th century so wise and good that they are not capable of any improvement?

Mr. H. gives the following as part of our sentiments, (I quote from memory):—"That there is nothing which had a begining but what will have an end."—"That the scriptures are to be taken in their literal sense."—"That Paradise is not heaven."—"That England will be destroyed in the present generation. That Jesus Christ will come and destroy the wicked; and they, the Latter-Day Saints, and they only, will reign with-him on the earth."—"That they are the only people who preach the gospel, and that all others preach *nothing* but damnable heresies."—"That, there is but one person in the Godhead, and that he has hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, mouth," &c.—And "That all persons must be plunged over head in water by them, or they cannot be saved."

As to the literal sense, we mean nothing more nor less than this, that the scriptures should be taken in the common, plain, easy sense, the same as language found in any other book. Every language has its figures, but they are such as are definitely understood; for instance,

the terms dog, shepherd, sheep, wolves, goats, &c., when used in scripture as applying to human beings, are well understood by all readers, and no persons have been known to differ as to the meaning of them. As to prophesy, it has thus far had an exact literal accomplishment, and no other; therefore, we are safe in believing that those predictions which are yet future in their application will be literally fulfilled.

As to the parables of our Lord, they are generally interpreted by him that spake them, and those which are not thus interpreted will need a revelation from their author. The Saints have no objections to the scriptures being explained by the gift of inspiration, which is the only true and safe expounder of scripture.

Paradise is heaven; but it is not the heaven of those who are raised from the dead, but the place of rest for disembodied spirits to await the resurrection: "In my father's house are many mansions," says Jesus.—Paul tells of three heavens.

As to England being destroyed in the present generation, the Saints hold to no such principle. The people of England may repent, and never be destroyed; but if they do not repent, they will perish, in common with all nations who are unprepared for the second advent of the Messiah: For lo! the time is near—very near, when every one who does not give heed to Jesus Christ "will be destroyed from among the people." This applies equally to England, and all other places.

We do affirm "*that very shortly the sun shall be darkened, and the moon turned to blood; and Christ will appear in flaming fire, to destroy all the wicked from off the face of the earth;*" and that, then, the Latter-Day Saints will reign with Christ a thousand years; but to say that "*they only*" will reign with him, is very erroneous: for truly, all the Former Day Saints will reign with him also.—(See Rev. 20.)

To say, "we" are the only people who preach the gospel, and that all others preach nothing but damnable heresies," is very far from truth. We say this,—That there is but *one true* gospel, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, and *one* holy Spirit, revealed among men;

and that all who differ from that *one* system are in error, and have cause to repent. But after setting forth that *one* gospel, we leave the people to draw their own conclusion as to who comes up to the standard, and who does not. But to say that "*all others preach nothing but damnable heresies,*" would be false indeed; for we presume our friend Mr. H. preaches faith in Christ, and repentance towards God; and if he does, such doctrine is not damnable, but as far as it goes it is good.

There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father and Son are in the express *image* of each other, and both have "*hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth,*" as every body ought to know who has read the old and new testaments. And man is created in their *image*, or *likeness*.

If Mr. H. worships any other Deity than the one above described, and the Holy Ghost which proceeds from the Father and the Son, then he is guilty of idolatry.

To say that all penitent believers are required by the gospel to be baptised by immersion in water, in name of the Lord, is perfectly correct. There is nothing else which is baptism, or can be called so. To baptise or to bury are terms of the same import. This is one of the commandments of Jesus Christ himself. **HE WHO KEEPS HIS COMMANDS IS BUILT ON THE ROCK.—HE WHO DOES NOT KEEP THEM IS BUILT UPON THE SAND.** To say that "*all must be thus baptised by the Latter-Day Saints, or be damned,*" is false. All who were baptised by the former-day Saints will be *saved*, if they endured to the end in keeping all the commandments of Jesus. But we do teach, that all those who have trusted to infant baptism, or all who have trusted to any other form but a *burial*, or all who have been immersed without authority from God, in the administrator, are required to be baptised, and God has sent us to preach repentance and baptism, and to administer it, and has given us the pattern; and whether it is better to obey God or man judge ye.

Mr. Hewitt says, "there is no scripture for putting men overhead in water." To this we reply, that it says "**BURY,**" in speaking of baptism.—(Rom. vi.) But

perhaps Mr. H. knows some way to bury persons, and leave their heads out ! But we are so simple as to take it for granted that their head is a part of their person !

There is one other charge, on the 5th page, which we had like to have overlooked. It is this : Mr. H. says, the Saints hold that "*there is nothing which had a beginning, but what will have an end.*"

I have been an official member of this church for upwards of 10 years, and never heard that doctrine before ; but as it is a principle of philosophy instead of religion, I shall not here judge of it.

Thus, Mr. H. has imagined to himself a system which he is pleased to term a "*newly-formed system of saving grace.*" This system he charges upon the Latter-Day Saints ; but I must say his imaginary Latter-Day Saintism, is as new to me as it is to him. I now exhort him, if he has wilfully falsified our system, to repent of the same ; and if he has done it ignorantly, he would do well to repent ; and in either case, he would do well to make the acknowledgment as public as the offence. I would inform him that our columns are open to publish anything of that nature ; and if he aims at justice and sincerity he will rejoice to do so. He will then be in that respect a "*practical Christian.*"

The terms "*wolves,*" "*brain-sick fellows,*" &c., applied to those who believe in, and strive to serve, Jesus Christ, do not in our opinion accord with "*practical Christianity ;*" but, however, we leave it to his own conscience, and to God.

Mr. H. quotes "*Mr. Simpson,*" in order to prove that there has been no necessity for angelic appearances since the days of the apostles ; but that the angels now minister "*in a secret and invisible manner.*" Now, whether he means that "*Mr. Simpson*" is an INSPIRED PROPHET, who has been sent to do away the gospel dispensation, and change the new testament order of things ; or whether he only means to institute the traditions and commandments of men, and thus make void the word of the Lord, is not for us to say ; but we would just inform him, that we had much rather have a quotation from Christ, or his prophets and apostles, than to believe Mr. Simpson.

"In vain they worship me; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," says Jesus.

Again, if the angels minister only in a "*secret and invisible way*," who knows it, or who has witnessed it? It seems to me that there can be no evidence for it, except the revelation which "*Mr. Simpson*" and Mr. H. have revealed to the world; and as their new revelation on this subject contradicts all experience and scripture, I, for one, beg leave to reject it.

Mr. H. puts the following question: "*Now, if all men were wrong, as they, (the Latter-Day Saints,) affirm, and God thought proper to send an angel to convince them of the error of their ways, would he not have sent him to more than one man?*" We answer yes; the Lord sent him to four men, to begin the testimony, and to many others since.—(See the testimony appended to the Book of Mormon.)

Mr. H. quotes, "*If they hear not Moses, nor the prophets, nor God's dear Son, neither will they be persuaded though one should arise from the dead.*" This passage is strikingly verified in the person of Mr. Hewitt. He has had Moses—he has had the prophets—he has had the testimony of Jesus—and now, last of all, one from the dead. And still, "*it appears so absurd that he cannot believe it!*" The reason which he renders for not believing is, that Mr. Simpson has said to the contrary.

Now, if all the saints in all ages, and under all dispensations, were wrong in believing such things, and God has seen fit to reveal to Mr. Simpson that there is to be no visible appearances of angels, then why has he not revealed it to more than one man?!!!

Mr. H. quotes the 21st of Luke, in relation to the signs of the second coming, and applies it all to the destruction of Jerusalem: but he should recollect, that in connection with these signs, in that subject we have the following,—"*Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*"

Dare any man pervert the plain word of God so far as to say that this was all fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem?

The term "this generation" as it stands connected with the foregoing texts, applies to the generation which learns the parable of the fig-tree, by seeing the signs there foretold, begin to come to pass. That same generation will not all pass away, till the Son of Man comes. Any other application of it will lead to infidelity.

Mr. H. quotes the saying of Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and applies it to the time of his glorious reign on the earth, as well as to his first coming: this is a wrong application altogether. The text applies in the then present tense; that is, to the age and dispensation when it was spoken.

A text the very opposite of the above, applies to the millennial dispensation, viz.: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."—Revelations.

Mr. H. quotes the parable of the wheat and the tares, and that both are to "grow together till the harvest," in order to show that the wicked will remain upon the earth mingled with the righteous until the end of time, or the last day.

Here again he stumbles, for want of giving heed to the manner in which the Saviour applied terms.

The term "*world*" is frequently used in scripture as applying to the wicked—to that portion of the people who were not of the kingdom of God. For instance: "Ye are not of the *world*, therefore shall the *world* hate you."

When Christ comes, and cuts off the wicked from the face of the earth—then will be the end of the wicked—the end of the world, or the end of the present corrupt order of things. Therefore, in connexion with, or previous to, his second advent, the wheat must be gathered out from the tares, and the tares be bound in bundles ready for the burning. See Zechariah xiv. chap., Isaiah xxiv. chap., also Acts iii. chap., Malichi last chap., and Isaiah xi. chap. All these, and many other passages must be broken, unless the Lord cuts off wickedness at the commencement of the millennium, and leaves the righteous in possession of the earth.

Perhaps after a careful examination of the matter, it

will be found, that the people can believe Jesus Christ, and "these strangers," too, as Mr. H. calls the Latter-Day Saints.

In regard to his observations on the Godhead, we have nothing to reply; only that he has entirely misrepresented us, (perhaps unintentionally). Whoever reads our books, or hears us preach, knows that we believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as one God. That the Son has flesh and bones, and that the Father is a spirit. But we would inform Mr. H. that a personage of spirit has its organized formation, its body and parts, its individual identity, its eyes, mouth, ears, &c., and that it is in the image or likeness of the temporal body, although not composed of such gross materials as flesh and bones; hence it is said that Jesus is "the express image of his (the father's) person."

We would next enquire of Mr. H. how he would have us apply a scripture which is neither "emblematical," "parabolic," "metaphorical," nor yet literal? Perhaps he may have some key, which we know not of! As to Christ's saying, in relation to hating father, mother, &c., it is so plain when taken in its connection, that I believe no persons have mistaken it. The commandment to "take no thought for the morrow" (in regard to food and clothing) is brought forward by Mr. H. as proof that the scriptures do not mean what they say. To which we reply, that if there is any passage in the bible which is to be taken literally, it is the one just quoted. But the next question is, who does this text apply to? To those whom Christ sent into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. It would be as absurd to apply every scripture to every body, as it would be for every body to build an ark because Noah was commanded to build one.

² The same remarks will apply with equal force to the text which he quotes in favour of the drunkard. The text ("drink ye, be drunken and spue,") will apply only to certain nations to whom the prophet addressed himself.

Mr. H. (speaking of the rich man) says, according to our doctrine, "the eye of the needle must either be made larger or the camel smaller, or the rich man in

another world will be consigned to everlasting punishment." This parable applied to a rich man, is very easily got along with by us. We never make the eye of the needle larger, but rather, the camel smaller; that is, we teach the rich men to impart to the poor all they have to spare; and by so doing they will be as poor as their brethren. And if they do not do this, they will be damned, if Christ's words are true in relation to "depart ye cursed," &c., "for I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat," &c.

If they do impart, as the gospel requires, then of course the camel is made smaller.—To men, this seems almost impossible but it is possible for God even to open the heart of a rich man.

Mr. H. says of the Saints, "If their assertions be true, then they have authority to preach the gospel to dogs, cats, mules, and other beasts, as well as men." He then quotes, "Go ye," &c. "and preach the gospel to *every creature*."

In answer to this, we would ask Mr. H. what is the most literal, plain, simple meaning of that text, when taken in its connection? Suppose, for instance, her Majesty should command some persons to go into all England, and teach the laws of England to *every creature*; how would the word *creature* be applied in law? Answer—It would apply to every creature who is capable of receiving the instruction spoken of in the commission.

Among a thousand jurors, all would agree that this would be its most obvious and literal meaning.

The language of scripture is to be understood as similar language would be in other books.

Mr. H. next quotes John vi. 35.—"*He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth shall never thirst:*" he then says, "*Take this temporally and I ask, do we ever feel in want of food, &c.?*" I answer yes. *Then take it spiritually, do we ever feel hungerings and thirstings after righteousness?* I answer yes; and blessed are they that do, for they shall be filled; Where then is their literal meaning?"

To the above questions we reply, that he has answered them himself by the quotation, "*Blessed are they that*

do, for they shall be filled." If Mr. H. will have patience till this promise is fulfilled, then, of course, he will acknowledge the literal meaning of the text.

He says, according to our doctrine, "Jesus Christ is a god, a king, an angel, a man, a tree, a plant, a root, a rose, a lily, a gate, a door, a way, a stone."

To this we reply, that he is a god, a king, an angel, a man, a tree, (viz. a vine,) a plant, a root, a gate, a door, a way, a stone. But as to the rose or lily, we know of no such terms as applying to Christ. Solomon's Song mentions such terms to be sure; but there is not a word about Christ in the whole song, nor the most distant allusion to him.

Mr. H. says, "*the Saints cannot find one passage in the Scriptures that says that any should be put over head in water.*"

This we acknowledge: But, then, we find Paul makes use of the word BURY, in speaking of baptism. But doubtless he was quite willing for them to be buried with their heads out of water, if Mr. H. can tell how to do so; but, for my own part, I have not the knowledge how to bury a person by baptism, without burying their head!!!

Mr. H. on the 10th page makes an assertion, that infants must be lost for ever, because they cannot believe. This doctrine is so horrible, that it seems to us to need no reply; therefore, we pass on. He next refers the reader to Abraham Scott's pamphlet, and Daniel Isaac's work on Infant Baptism. I would much sooner take the word of God, than the words of Messrs. Scott and Isaac, and I would recommend my readers to do the same. Mr. H says, immersion is in vain, we must "*be born again.*" But, I would enquire, what we are to be born again of?!!! Christ says it is of *water* and of the *spirit*. But Mr. H. would make part of this commandment void, and by this means he would deprive us of the other part.

On the 10th page Mr. H. compares the doctrine of his society with the doctrine of Paul, and tries to make out that they are both the same. But it seems plain to me that Paul taught that the commandments of Jesus

were essential, and Mr. H. preaches that some of them are not.

Paul taught the gifts and power of God, and Mr. H., or at least many others of the Methodist society, teach that they (the gifts of the Spirit), are done away. But still I am willing that every one should judge for themselves. As to him and his society, they stand or fall to their own master.

In regard to their getting the Holy Ghost by praying, while neglecting the ordinances of God, we do affirm that it is a chimera; for Christ says, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do* not the things that I say." "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Mr. H. enquires of us, What is the Gospel? We reply, That it is the message which God has sent for the salvation of men; or, to enter into particular points, it was, that men should believe in Jesus Christ, repent, and be baptised in his name; and, on these conditions, they were promised remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; which would cause them to dream dreams, see visions, and prophesy, and would impart to them many gifts. This gift was usually received by the laying on of hands, and prayer in the name of Jesus—after baptism.

On the 11th page, he expresses his astonishment that men should join another system, after being blessed of God, &c. But it seems to us, that the more a person is blessed, the more obligation they are under to walk in every truth, as fast as it is made known to them. No doubt many persons have been sincere in all orders, and have really been blessed of God, more or less; and so far from changing their religion, (I mean the true part of it), by joining the Saints, they bring it all along with them, only throwing away that part of it which is erroneous, and in turn receiving much more religion than they had before.